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Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2026 3:14 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: frdfass@aol.com; eolmanso@gmail.com; Brenna Marsicek <bmarsicek@madisonaudubon.org>
Subject: No Fireworks in the park on 6/25

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Dear Park Commissioners,

I have been a member of the Bald Eagle Nest Watch program with the Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance since 2021, observing the bald eagle nest in Warner Park. There are currently two chicks and two adults that are calling the lagoon area of the park their home. The nest tree sits out on the island in the lagoon.

Each year we spend one hour a week starting in February observing the nest and sending our information to the Bird Alliance for them to compile, and we eventually share it with the WDNR. We see the adults building their nest up in the winter and then showing up to see them lay their eggs, and tend to the chicks hatching and growing very fast. Carrying in food, feeding the chicks and helping them to learn to swim, to hunt, and how to be eagles in the area of the lagoon and Lake Mendota.

We, and the members of Wild Warner have been meeting with the Mallards Vern Stenman each year to discuss our concerns with their shooting off explosive fireworks in the park within a half mile of the breeding pair of eagles' nest, a protected species.

Vern has stated that he is willing to forego the fireworks display if the eaglets have not fledged, meaning successfully and completely left the nest. This means that they have the capacity to fly away from the nest, should they get startled by the fireworks. Baby eaglets can die if they fall out of their nest. I personally have observed three eaglets, all killed from a fall when a nest failed in the Cherokee Marsh. We hiked out 2 hours into the marsh to

make sure that no chicks were still alive, in case a rescue was in order. Sadly, not the case. It was a nest that failed and caused the chicks to fall out.

Right now, one of the chicks is still branching from the nest to nearby tree limbs. This indicates that it is still not fledged, trying to learn to fly and strengthening its wings. The other chick, a large female, is already fledged and tends to be out of view in nearby trees or might be off with the adults. The chicks will return to the nest for feeding and perching during the next couple of months while in training from the adults.

The smaller chick is still relying on the nest for its safety, its meals and cannot yet hunt. These chicks are like toddlers that are just starting to walk. They can get up and walk on their own, but are very wobbly and hardly ready to jump up and go if they were suddenly shocked by loud noise and flashes of light.

The Mallards must keep their agreement with Parks, with Wild Warner and with the Bird Alliance and the birding community that they will NOT shoot off fireworks if the chicks have not fledged. Both chicks have not fledged.

We have a good partnership with the Mallards and know that they have been working with all of us on the reduction of the number of fireworks and their willingness to not use the fireworks if the chicks are not yet out of the nest. Let's not do any harm to a federally protected migratory bird, and their young.

Many thanks,

Beth Sluys

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